

Message Text

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15

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 SY-04 USSS-00 SCCT-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSO-00 NSCE-00

OPR-01 A-01 /071 W

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P R 301054Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7342

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 0239

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, PINS PORS TD IN

SUBJECT: BOMB AT INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION

CARACAS FOR RSO

REF: PORT OF SPAIN 217

1. FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON ATTEMPTED BOMBING OF INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION JAN 29 GAINED IN CONVERSATION WITH DEPUTY INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER JAN 30.

2. BOMB WAS GENUINE AND EXPLOSIVE WAS COMBINATION OF GUNPOWDER AND GELIGNITE WHICH POLICE ESTIMATED EQUIVALENT TO TEN POUNDS OF TNT. DEVICE FOUND BESIDE FRONT DOOR BY EARLY MORNING CLEANING STAFF AND INNOCENTLY BROUGHT INTO CHANCERY FOYER. PARCEL NOTED THERE BY DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER ABOUT 0900 AND UPON INQUIRY HE WAS TOLD BY RECEPTIONIST THAT SHE THOUGHT IT WAS A RAT TRAP (OFFICE HAD BEEN PLAGUED BY RATS). UPON CLOSER EXAMINATION, DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER DISCOVERED THAT THE DEVICE APPEARED TO BE A BOMB WITH A RAT TRAP TRIGGER LINKED TO A TIMING DEVICE. THE STAFF THEN MOVED THE BOX TO THE CHANCERY COURTYARD AND
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THE POLICE WERE CALLED.

3. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER WAS UNABLE TO REACH ANY HIGH POLICE OFFICIAL PROMPTLY, BUT THE POLICE DID SEND THREE PLAIN CLOTHESMEN TO THE SCENE IN SHORT ORDER. THE POLICE HANDLING WHICH ENSUED, HOWEVER, WAS CERTAINLY DEFICIENT IN PROFESSIONALISM. THE POLICE DID BLOCK ONE ACCESS STREET TO THE INTERSECTION AT WHICH THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION STANDS, BUT DID NOTHING TO INHIBIT HEAVY VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC ON THE MAIN STREET BETWEEN THE HIGH COMMISSION AND THE QUEEN'S PARK IN FRONT OF THE CHANCERY.

4. BORROWING A CORD FROM THE HIGH COMMISSION, THE POLICE PROCEEDED BUMPILY TO PULL THE EXPLOSIVE DEVICE ACROSS THE HEAVILY TRAVELLED STREET TO THE QUEEN'S PARK. APPARENTLY THE CORD BROKE TWICE, AND HEAVY TRUCK TRAFFIC LITERALLY ALMOST RAN OVER THE PARCEL. UPON CLOSER EXAMINATION LATER IN THE PARK, IT WAS DETERMINED THAT THE BOMB'S TRIGGER HAD FIRED, BUT JUST MISSED THE DETONATOR. WHETHER THIS OCCURRED BEFORE OR AFTER THE ROUGH STREET CROSSING IS NOT KNOWN. THE EXPLOSIVE ITSELF WAS IN A THREE-INCH DIAMETER PIPE CAPPED AT BOTH ENDS.

5. INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION HAS NO CLUE AS TO ORIGIN OR PURPOSE OF ATTEMPTED BOMBING. THEY ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY GROUP LOCALLY WHICH WOULD HAVE REASON TO PERPETRATE SUCH AN ACT AND NEITHER ARE WE. DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER NOTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN AN ATTACK ON INDIAN CONSULATE GENERAL IN NEW YORK RECENTLY BY ZIONISTS AFTER INDIA RECOGNIZED PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO), BUT THEY WERE NOT AWARE OF ANY ZIONIST ACTIVISTS IN TRINIDAD.

6. INDIAN HICOM HAS SOUGHT ASSURANCES OF GREATER PROTECTION FROM GOTT MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND IS CONSIDERING WHETHER TO SEEK COORDINATED FURTHER REPRESENTATIONS BY DIPLOMATIC CORPS.

7. SITUATION HIGHLIGHTS LOCAL POLICE UNPREPAREDNESS TO DEAL WITH TERRORIST BOMBING ATTEMPTS. POLICE TOLD INDIANS THAT THIS IS FIRST TERRORIST ATTACK ON ANY FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC MISSION HERE. WHEN WE HAVE PRESSED POLICE IN PAST REGARDING BOMB DISPOSAL CAPABILITIES THEY HAVE GENERALLY TREATED SUBJECT AS UNNECESSARY SINCE THEY FELT THAT THEY DID NOT HAVE MAJOR PROBLEM HERE AND HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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SUFFICIENT CAPABILITY. REGRETTABLY, TRINIDAD IS NOW NO LONGER VIRGINAL IN THIS REGARD.

8. INCIDENT MADE HEADLINES IN BOTH MORNING DAILY PAPERS IN PORT OF SPAIN JAN 30, BUT POLICE WITHHELD SOME OF DETAILS AND ABOVE INFORMATION SHOULD BE PROTECTED. AFTERNOON "EVENING NEWS" EDITORIAL JAN 30 DEPLORES INCIDENT BUT SUGGESTS THAT IT MUST HAVE BEEN WORK OF PRANKSTER. WHILE AT A LOSS TO ATTRIBUTE MOTIVE,

NEITHER INDIANS NOR WE CONSIDER INCIDENT CAN BE DISMISSED AS
"PRANK." INDIAN DEPUTY HICOM TOLD US THAT BOMB APPEARED TO
HIM TO BE EXPERTLY ASSEMBLED AND WAS NOT CRUDE DEVICE. WE EXPECT
TO GET A FURTHER REPORT FROM THE POLICE WHEN THEIR EXAMINATION
AND INVESTIGATION HAVE BEEN COMPLETED.
MILLER

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